

IN THE CLAIMS

Please enter the following claims:

1.-13. (cancelled)

14. (currently amended) A method of supplementing a cleaning and sterilizing process for a soiled item having bio-contaminants, comprising the steps of:

a. applying a chemical sterilizing agent to a clean item to achieve high-level disinfection; and

b. providing a final rinse of the high-level disinfected item with ozonated, filtered water stored in a tank to degrade remaining biomatter resulting from contamination of said water, wherein ozone is continuously added to the water in the tank by re-circulation past the venturi.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein said soiled item comprises an endoscope.

16.-17. (cancelled)

18. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein said soil comprises biofilm.

19. (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said chemical sterilizing agents are selected from the group consisting of glutaraldehyde, peracetic acid, and ethylene oxide.

21.-26. (cancelled)

27. (currently amended) A method of preventing cross-contamination of components within a sterilizing apparatus, comprising:

a. high-level disinfecting an item placed within said sterilizing apparatus according to a predetermined method; and

b. flushing said apparatus components, including a chamber, a filter, a tray, and a fill line, with ozonated water stored in a tank after the completion of step a, wherein ozone is continuously added to the water in the tank by re-circulation past a venturi.

28.-29. (cancelled)